



Southend Association of Voluntary Services

Review of Services

April 2012

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1. Introduction

Southend Association of Voluntary Services (SAVS) is the support and coordinating agency for the voluntary sector in the unitary authority area of Southend-on-Sea, liaising between voluntary groups, statutory organisations and the public. SAVS has a membership of 306 groups (April 2012) representing a cross-section of the diverse community in Southend-on-Sea. SAVS assists its membership by providing practical assistance, information and advice, representation, liaison with other organisations and training.

2. Background to the Review

As a membership organisation it is vital that members' views are taken into account. SAVS always asks its member organisations for comments on service in April each year. These comments will inform the work of SAVS officers in 2012/2013.

3. Method

This year SAVS used an online questionnaire to collect the required information and comments. Members without email addresses were sent a paper copy of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was based around four of the core services of a Council for Voluntary Service: development work; representation; liaison and strategic activities. The questionnaire also asked for opinions on the practical services which SAVS provides, such as funding advice and backroom/office services, Café and Catering as well as the Volunteer Centre.

4. Response

66 groups responded (21.5% of SAVS membership) to the questionnaire, and respondents represented a good cross-section of member groups and service areas of children & young people, older people, disability, ethnic minorities and carers are included.

5. Conclusion

Responses were received from a good cross section of the membership and ratings for services were predominantly Valuable or Very Valuable.

The results show that each department continues to carry out work which is used and valued by the membership. Comments and suggestions will be taken on board and implemented where possible.

Strategic messages will be circulated to partners via this report and also our CEO.

There will be regular opportunities for feedback regarding the services SAVS offers posted on SAVS website.

6. Results

The first four Sections of the Survey asked about the core functions carried out by SAVS (Development Work, Liaison, Representation & Partnership and Strategic Activities)

Development Work

SAVS provides services to assist groups with their development e.g. advice on charitable status, accounting and governance, funding and training.

We asked if our Members had used this Service. 50% had used this Service, of whom 85.3% found it valuable.

Comments:

- We have had valuable and important services from SAVS
- Good advice on various topics given in a very friendly manner
- Most helpful to have a dedicated and experienced person to call on for advice and guidance.

Liaison

SAVS provide opportunities for liaison with other groups and statutory bodies e.g. forums, Third Sector Voice Panels, Third Sector Voice Assembly, networking opportunities and events.

50% of Members had participated, of whom 90.6% said they found it valuable.

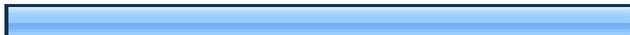
Comments:

- Really great chance to network and find out what else is going on in the area. Great potential for partnership work. Would be lovely to request subjects to be covered in the talks.
- The Third Sector initiative is still quite new but from the first couple of assembly's they have proven quite worthwhile.
- Good contacts and knowledge passed on with speakers from different fields

Representation & Partnership

SAVS represents the Third Sector with statutory partners to ensure we have the ability to input and influence into service design and delivery

We asked our Members if they found this Service valuable. Below is a graph of the responses received and comments from members:

Yes		86.9%	53
No		13.1%	8

Comments:

- I feel people need a place like SAVS to get advice and they have a good Cafe

Strategic Activities

SAVS is involved in a range of strategic partnerships e.g. The Compact, Equalities Board, Local Safeguarding Children's Board, etc to ensure the Third Sector in Southend is involved in future strategies.

Members were asked if they found this service valuable. 94.7% of members said this was a valuable service.

Message for Strategic Organisations

We asked Members if they had a message for strategic organisations (i.e. the local Council, Primary Care Trust or a strategic partnership such as Southend Together) that they would like us to put forward on their behalf. 26.8% of Members said they had a message they would like to put forward.

These are listed below:

Comments:

- To encourage as many local schools as possible to register for the Food for Life Partnership at <http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/>
- Please keep us informed and involved regarding all the changes to public sector and NHS commissioning and reform. Thank you.
- To the local Primary Care Trust. The Lady McAdden Breast Screening Unit has recently successfully completed its registration with the Care Quality Commission and without any conditions attached. We are available to assist with the local planning and delivery of breast cancer and educational services within our community.
- Tell Southend council to get their act together and start spending more time and money on people above roads and other less important projects.
- Don't commission large "one size fits all" contracts to try and save money. In the long run it results in poor services and weakens the voluntary sector.
- They should make funding available to small charity organisations
- Recognise the value of the VS and include them in delivery but do not use them to deliver services no longer available in the statutory sector.
- I can provide quality pc training at affordable prices
- Our meetings are attended by Supporting People Team members who are part of Southend Borough Council. Other departments and guest speakers are also invited. However we would like all organisations to make their websites more user friendly with alternatives to increase accessibility. Change the seafront shared space.
- For the strategic organisations to better understand the contribution made by charitable organisations to communities, especially for minority/ethnic communities.
- Commissioners need to pay providers a realistic price to get a quality reliable service. We often have to pick up the pieces with families when they are let down by other providers usually the cheaper ones!
- We would like the local council help all communities to promote harmony, minimise isolation within Southend-On-Sea.
- PCT could commission a project for EAWA on some health issues specific to Asian Women
- SBC should give more financial support to loss- making bus routes

Volunteer Centre

The Volunteer Centre provides a brokerage service to help Third Sector organisations find volunteers and helps in all areas of good practice.

We asked Members if they were aware of the services available from the Volunteer Centre. The response is shown in the following graph and comments are below.



Comments:

- The VCS have provided a considerable number of suitable volunteers to us.
- EAWA has had a lot of support in getting established

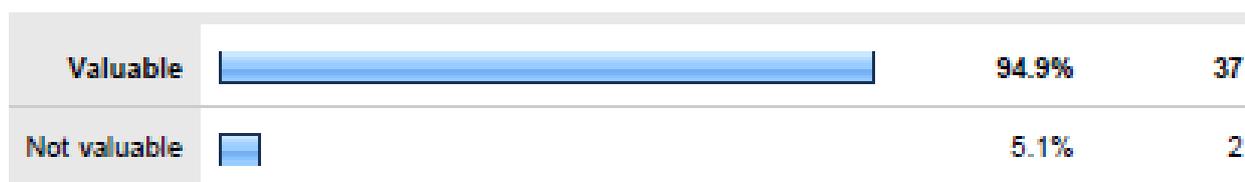
We asked Members if their organisation has benefited from the services offered by the Volunteer Centre. The response is shown in the following graph with comments below.



Comments:

- I regularly referred my client to your centre to enquire about volunteering
- To very good effect. Their service is second to none

We asked Members who had used the services of the Volunteer Centre to rate the service. The response is shown in the following graph. Comments are listed below.



Comments:

- Excellent - very hard to find skilled volunteers otherwise.
- The training that I have attended has been very good

Supported Volunteering Project

The Supported Volunteering Project provides support for people who have experienced mental ill health into volunteering roles. The project also supports the organisations who take on the supported volunteers.

We asked Members if they were aware of the services available from the supported volunteering project. The response is shown in the following graph.

Yes		58.5%	31
No		41.5%	22

We asked Members if their organisation has benefited from the services offered by the Supported Volunteering Project. The response is shown in the following graph.

Yes		20.0%	10
No		80.0%	40

Of the 20.0% of Members who had used the services of the supported volunteering project, 78.6% found it valuable.

Valuable		78.6%	11
Not valuable		21.4%	3

Funding/Governance

SAVS Commissioning, Procurement and Funding Officer assists new organisations in their development and advises them on how to write good funding bids and where to access funding.

We asked whether our membership organisations raised funding with the help of funding information advice from SAVS 15.1% said they had.

The following comments were received:

Comments:

- Very helpful. Good advice by Jo and Susannah
- We managed to get funding with the help from Jo
- Jo Mac is 5 star

Information, Communication/Media Services

SAVS provides a monthly information email (Items of Interest), a quarterly newsletter, SAVS Website, Directories and website design for member groups.

Members were asked whether the following services were valuable to them the table below shows the responses.

	Valuable	Not Valuable
SAVS Website	85.4% (41)	14.6% (7)
SAVS Newsletter	93.2% (41)	6.8% (3)
Weekly Email	88.0% (44)	12.0% (6)
6 Weekly E bulletin	89.5% (34)	10.5% (4)
Community Support Directory	82.2% (37)	17.8% (8)

Turning Tides Project

Turning Tides delivers a range of projects in the 3 most deprived wards of Southend to support the most vulnerable members of the community.

Members were asked whether they were aware of the following services offered by Turning Tides and the responses are shown in the graphs below each question.

	Yes	No
Active Citizens	69.8% (30)	30.2% (13)
Home Safety Visits	52.4% (22)	47.6% (20)
Local Sustainable Transport Fund	43.0% (18)	56.1% (23)
TTT's Youth Project	45.0% (18)	55.0% (22)
'Mo' Books	23.7% (9)	76.3% (29)
None of the above	52.9% (9)	47.1% (8)

Conferencing Facilities and Cafe

We asked our members whether you have used SAVS Function Rooms in the last year 17.3% had used our conferencing facilities we went on to ask members to rate on a scale of 1 to 4 on the following points a table below shows the responses.

	Very Good	Good	Average	Below Average
Booking Process	77.8% (7)	11.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	11.1% (1)
Catering	62.5% (5)	25.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (1)
Equipment	66.7% (6)	22.2% (2)	0.0% (0)	11.1% (1)
Payment Process	75.0% (6)	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (1)
Overall Satisfaction	77.8% (7)	11.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	11.1% (1)

Future Services

Like all our members, SAVS is facing financially challenging times and we want to ensure we continue to deliver services that are important to you. We asked our members to rate how valuable the following services would be, the table below shows the results.

	Valuable	Not Valuable	N/A
Funding Advice	61.5% (32)	9.6% (5)	28.8% (15)
Training	69.2% (36)	7.7% (4)	23.1% (12)
Development Advice	50.0% (26)	15.4% (8)	34.6% (18)
Opportunities for groups to network	75.0% (39)	5.8% (3)	19.2% (10)
Representation of the Sector	67.3% (35)	5.8% (3)	26.9% (14)
Strategic Partnerships	59.6% (31)	13.5% (7)	26.9% (14)
Volunteer Centre Services	63.5% (33)	11.5% (6)	25.0% (13)
Newsletter	78.8% (41)	9.6% (5)	11.5% (6)
Weekly Email	82.7% (43)	7.7% (4)	9.6% (5)
6 Weekly e bulletin	67.3% (35)	13.5% (7)	19.2% (10)
Community Support Directory	82.7% (43)	9.6% (5)	7.7% (4)
Website	82.7% (43)	9.6% (5)	7.7% (4)
Support to enable Third Sector	67.3% (35)	5.8% (3)	26.9% (14)
Organisations to work in Partnerships	76.9% (40)	7.7% (4)	15.4% (8)

Finally we asked all our members which of the following services they would like to see developed in the future the results for this are below

	Yes	No
Links to Local Businesses	77.8% (35)	22.2% (10)
Enable Organisation to share resources	85.1% (40)	14.9% (7)
Research of the Sector	66.7% (28)	33.3% (14)
Support with fundraising events	59.1% (26)	40.9% (18)

SAVS Members are mainly based in the Borough of Southend but they cover a wide geographical area in their work including Essex, Southend & Thurrock, London, Kent, Surrey, Harlow, Herts, East of England.

Our Members are pleased with the Services SAVS offers to them and Membership continues to grow steadily.